



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Managing California's Working Lands

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

801 K STREET • MS 24-07 • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

PHONE 916 / 323-1886 • FAX 916 / 323-1887 • TDD 916 / 324-2555 • WEB SITE conservation.ca.gov

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Contact:

Don Drysdale, CA Dept. Of Conservation, (916) 323-1886

Krista Watson, CA Dept. Of Conservation, (916) 323-1886

Important Farmland Information Now Available Online

SACRAMENTO – In an effort to make farmland information more readily accessible to the public, Important Farmland data is now available in a Web-based, searchable format. Thanks to a new application developed by the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), the California Important Farmland Finder (CIFF) can be used on mobile devices as well as desktop computers to locate an area of interest, calculate acreage, and determine farmland status.

“We are living in an age where apps and interactive tools are being produced at a rapid rate, and people are using them more and more to process and understand information,” said Department of Conservation Director Mark Nechodom. “As the public wants a better grasp of land use, conservation, and how public dollars are spent, we believe this new app will serve Californians well.”

CIFF users can search by address, zip code, county, latitude and longitude coordinates, or by using the GPS function on their mobile device. The application describes the property as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, or Grazing Land, based on USDA and local criteria.

The CIFF could prove to be particularly useful for the real estate industry: Legislation that became effective in 2009, requires that in order to minimize land-use conflicts, purchasers of real estate must be informed whether the property in question is within one mile of agricultural land.

“There can be issues where someone buys property near agricultural land and the new owners become disturbed about the noise, dust, or smell of farming operations,” said Molly Penberth, head of the FMMP. “So this is a real estate disclosure similar to notification that property is in a seismic zone or a flood plain.”

This interactive mapping function, while being the first of its kind for the Division of Land Resource and Protection (which houses the FMMP program), follows in the footsteps of other Department of Conservation programs that have developed interactive Web-based applications for the public's convenience.

The department's Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources has an online mapping system and well record search function. The California Geological Survey offers online access to Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Maps, allowing individuals to determine whether their property is located within an earthquake fault zone. The Office of Mine Reclamation has a Mines On Line Database, making it easier for the public to determine where mines are located, whether they are active, and what commodity they produce.

"In the past, when a real estate company or environmental consulting firm would call with questions about how many acres of prime farmland are affected by a proposed development, we would set aside what we were working on, square off a portion of the map and calculate the number of acres for each individual consultation," said Penberth. "It took a lot of time. Now these users can pick a data point and it will calculate acreage within a mile of their site. The real estate people don't have to make an educated guess or call the state. Now they can just look it up themselves. It really streamlines the process for everyone."

The FMMP produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California's agricultural resources. The maps are updated every two years with the use of a computer mapping system, aerial imagery, public review, and field reconnaissance.

For more information or to use the CIFF, visit www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/CIFF.aspx.

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